DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 269 149 PS 015 774

AUTHOR Conroyd, S. Danielle
TITLE Employer Sponsored Child Care: Issues and Options.
PUB DATE 25 Mar 86
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the "Employer-Sponsored Child Care: Issues and Options" Conference (Detroit, MI, March 25, 1986).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Day Care Centers; Early Childhood Education; *Employer Supported Day Care; Hospitals; *Program Administration; *Program Content; Program Descriptions

ABSTRACT

This presentation describes the child care center at Detroit's Mount Carmel Hospital, a division of the Sisters of Mercy Health Corporation employing approximately 1,550 women. Discussion focuses on reasons for establishing the center, facility acquisition, program details, program management, developmental philosophy, parent involvement, policy issues, employee morale, and accreditation. The child care center is seen as an important benefit for employees and one which clearly communicates the hospital's commitment to improving the quality of work life for employees. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED269149

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

PRESENTATION - EMPLOYER SPONSORED CHILD CARE: ISSUES AND OPTIONS

MARCH 25, 1986

MC GREGOR MEMORIAL CONFERENCE CENTER

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

S. Danielle Conroyd

Mount Carmel Hospital, located in Detroit, is one of 16 divisions within the Sisters of Mercy Health Corporation. We employ approximately 2,000 employees, 77% of whom are female. To paraphrase the sentiments of one Mount Carmel employee, "Opening the Child Care Center was the best thing Mount Carmel ever did for its employees. I think that sentiment would be echoed by all the parent employees who use our Child Care Center.

WHY MOUNT CARMEL DECIDED TO ESTABLISH A CHILD CARE CENTER

How did we get started - Why did we do it? I'd like to share our experience with you and hope that some of the things we did and issues we faced will be helpful to you.

We conducted an employee survey in 1978 and again in 1981 to determine the extent of the need and desire for a child care center for the children of our employees. The 1981 survey showed that 51% of the respondents were dissatisfied with their present child care arrangements. The reasons cited for the dissatisfaction were: 1) the inconvenience of child care provider hours (27.4%) 2) sitter unreliability (22.4%), distance traveled to sitter (21.4%), and cost (25%).

Eighty-five percent of all participants in the survey indicated the main reason for requiring child care was to accommodate working parents.

The survey also indicated that 63.9% of all respondents had experienced difficulty arranging child care.

PS 015774

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
S. Danielle Conroyd
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

In 1981, most hospitals were experiencing difficulty in recruiting nurses and, after hiring nurses, keeping them. Mount Carmel was no different. We viewed the establishment of a Child Care Center as an attractive benefit to use as a recruiting tool in the increasingly competitive medical personnel marketplace.

Another goal of the Center was to facilitate the retention of trained health care providers in the face of a skilled personnel shortage.

Other reasons for establishing the Center were:

- provide a benefit for employees

- to reduce costs associated with lost work hours, overtime, due to child related absences and tardiness

- improve morale of hospital employees with children by responding to an expressed demand on the part of employees for convenient child care services

In 1982, our Board approved the establishment of a Child Care facility for our employees.

FACILITY

After the hospital board gave final approval for the Child Care Center project, a Task force began implementation of the plan.

The hospital purchased a building located across the street from the hospital. We retained an architect to design the center and hired contractors to begin the interior and exterior renovations. We also hired a Child Care Consultant to ensure that the new facility would accommodate the provision of high quality child care. The Center has an office, commons area, five large classrooms, kitchen and a staff lounge and playground. Rooms are equipped with childsize furniture and a variety of play equipment.

DETAILS OF THE PROGRAM

Today over 100 children of Mount Carmel employees are enrolled in the Child Care Center. The Infant Room has a capacity for 12 infants and there is a waiting list. The Toddler room is close to capacity with 33 children. The Pre-school room, however, with 45 children is not yet full.

The Center is open for 13½ hours, from 6:00 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. Monday thru Friday. Children aged six weeks through five years come daily to play, learn and grow. Tuition is $2.10 hr. for Infants and Toddlers and includes formula, baby food and diapers. Tuition for preschoolers is $1.60 an hour and includes meals. Employees pay the tuition by payroll deduction.

Several hospital departments provide support services for the Child Care Center, namely Housekeeping, Food Services, Security, Maintenance and Linen.

MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAM

We contract with Mercy College, a Sister institution, to manage and staff our child care center. All of the employees of the Child Care Center are Mercy College employees. The Director of the Center, also an employee of the College, reports to me and to the Director of the Child Development program at the College. We have found that this arrangement has worked very well. We are able to provide our employees with a high quality, comprehensive developmental child care center and have control over the quality of care by hiring experts in the field of early childhood development, namely Mercy College. All center staff are experienced early childhood educators. The Director holds a Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education. The teachers are professionally trained and hold at least a Bachelors degree as teachers of young children. Assistant teachers have extensive experience working with young children.

In the materials you have, there is a list of the items covered in our management contract, should you want to consider this method of providing child care for your employees.

The first item on the list is the goals of the Center. It is important to clearly define the kind of center you want to provide. In addition to ensuring the health, safety and general welfare of the children, you will need to decide on the philosophy of the center as it relates to early childhood development and then establish your goals which are in line with that philosophy. I want to emphasize this as an important part of a good program. If you are going to invest the time and money in establishing a child care facility, you want to make sure that you have an excellent program, one that provides much more than custodial care.

PHILOSOPHY

We are confident that the developmental philosophy of our center is best for all the children - Children enjoy a day with a balance of active and quiet play, planned activities for small groups, individuals and large groups.

Staff observe each child's growth and are able to make sensitive decisions about when to assist, when to observe, when to provide guidelines and set limits, when to challenge and when to reward and praise.

Staff at the Center seek to nurture that special spark in each child that allows him/her to grow to their fullest potential. Each child learns at his/her own pace.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The Child Care Center staff encourage parents to participate in the program whenever and however possible. Parents are always welcome at the Center. Many parents visit their children during the day at lunch or break time. Teachers post the lesson plans outside the classrooms so parents will know the activities for the week. In the Infant and Toddler Rooms, parents receive a written report at the end of each day which details eating and sleeping routines. The Center publishes a Parents Newsletter and plans an annual picnic. Parents may also be involved in the development of some center policies.

ISSUES THAT AROSE

The Child Care Center is for our employees' children only. One of the issues that arose which we had to deal with was a greater demand for infant care than we had anticipated. Since good infant care is hard to find, our employees soon had to be put on a waiting list for the Infant room. Some parents have waited several months before a space opened up. Infant care is more expensive to provide than preschoolers and toddlers rooms, because the staff ratio is 1 teacher to four infants, as compared to 1 to 7 or 1 to 10. We decided to provide an infant room because we see it as the best way to increase enrollment in the preschooler rooms, even tho it is slow. A study of the children who have attended our Center shows that, for the majority of those children, the age of initial attendance was between 6 weeks and 9½ months old. Since we have only been in operation since 1983, our pre-school rooms are not yet full.

The question of whether to provide infant care is one you will have to address, should you open a child care center for your employees. It is also difficult to find well trained professionals in infant care.

Another policy decision we made was to allow both full-time and part-time children in our center. You will be better able to break even if you only allow full-time children. However, we have recently increased the part-time proportion of our workforce, particularly in nursing and thus do not want to exclude part-timers from using the Child Care Center.

However, we have met with the parents to explain the difficulty this poses for us in attaining full enrollment. They have been very cooperative in working with each other to schedule days of child care equal to one full-time child.

The hospital continues to subsidize the Child Care Center. We view this as a benefit we provide to our employees - in calendar 1985 we provided 93,666 hours of child care. We subsidized $1.60 an hour or 30% of infant care per hour.

EMPLOYEE MORALE

Our employees continually give excellent feedback, both formally and informally about the Child Care Center. Yearly parent surveys show parents are pleased with the care provided. We have found that the Center has aided in recruiting and retaining employees.

ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Our Child Care Center has chosen to participate in the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs accreditation system. The National Association for the Education of Young Children's primary goal is to improve the quality of life for young children and their families and in doing so, help children grow up to be happy, confident, loving adults. The accreditation process is designed to meet two major goals:

1. help early childhood program personnel become involved in improving quality of programs

2. evaluate the quality for purpose of accrediting high quality programs

When evaluating staff or programs you are considering as providers of child care for your employees, ask them whether they are aware of this system or have been accredited by NAEYC. It will give you some sense of the quality of care you might expect from the potential child care givers.

SUMMARY

In summary, we are glad we opened the Child Care Center. We see it is an important benefit for our employees and one which clearly communicates the hospital's commitment to improving the quality of work life for our employees.